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AN UNRECORDED VERSION OF *THE SHIP OF FOOLS*

BY RICHARD LEVIN

Although Timothy Granger never acknowledges this relationship, most of his poem, *The, xxv, orders of Fooles* (*c.*1570), is a very close copy of portions of Alexander Barclay's translation of *The Ship of Fools* (1509, 1570) and should be considered a condensed version of Barclay. Granger may also have been influenced by the catalogue of fools in Robert Copland's *Jyl of braintfords testament* (*c.*1563).

The, xxv, orders of Fooles by T. Gr. (Timothy Granger) was entered to Henry Kyrham in the Stationers' Register in 1569–1570 as 'a ballett' (Arber 1.414) and was published about 1570 in a single-sheet folio printed 'by Alexander Lacie, for Henrie Kyrkham' that survives in a unique copy in the British Library (*STC* 12187) and is reprinted in Henry Huth's *Ancient Ballads and Broadsides*.[1] As the title implies, it is a series of brief descriptions of various kinds of fools. Although it is in verse, no tune is specified, and it is hard to believe that it was ever sung, or ever achieved any popularity in its own day. Nor has it attracted any critical or scholarly attention since then, aside from a few passing references that locate it in the general tradition of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* and Erasmus's *Moriae Encomium*.

The poem does, however, have a very special and unusual relationship to this tradition that is not revealed by Granger and, as far as I know, has not been noticed: it borrows extensively from Alexander Barclay's *The Ship of Fools of the World*, a versified adaptation of the Latin, French, and Dutch versions of the *Narrenschiff* published in 1509 and again in 1570 (*STC* 3545, 3546). Actually 'borrows' is much too weak a term, since this is the most blatant case of unacknowledged pillaging that I have seen in the literature of the period. Granger's poem consists of twenty-five stanzas, each containing three couplets. Except for the introductory and concluding stanzas and stanza 14, which is transitional, every stanza devotes two couplets to a kind of fool

1 Henry Huth, *Ancient Ballads and Broadsides Published in England in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1867), reissued by Joseph Lilly as *A Collection of Seventy-Nine Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides, Printed in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, between the Years 1559 and 1597* (London, 1867). Granger's only other known work is a single-sheet folio in prose about '.XVII. monstrous fisshes, taken in Suffolke', published in 1568 (*STC* 2186). Henry Kirkham (Kyrham) is first mentioned in the *Stationers' Register* in 1560–1 (Arber 1.148) and entered thirty-nine titles there from 1569 until his death in 1593, two-thirds of which are ballads (including all twelve titles entered in 1569–71). Alexander Lacy was active as a printer from 1557 to 1571.

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(occasionally to two kinds), followed by a refrain, and in every one of these stanzas except the thirteenth at least one couplet, and usually both, is copied directly from Barclay, often almost word for word. In many stanzas the only significant changes occur when the passage in Barclay is in alternating rhyme, so that Granger has to omit an intervening line or combine two of them to produce his rhymed couplets. Indeed he appears to be so dependent on Barclay's rhymes that he will sometimes obscure or even alter Barclay's meaning in order to retain them.[2]

In the light of this relationship, therefore, Granger's poem should be classified not as an independent work but as a greatly condensed version of Barclay. Moreover, his stanzas usually follow the same order as Barclay's chapters (skipping many of them, of course), as can be seen from the chapter numbers of the passages quoted below, which suggests that he put together most of his poem as he proceeded through Barclay's book. (This even applies to stanza 13, although its language does not come from Barclay, since it deals with foolish messengers, who are the subject of Barclay's chapter 76, coming between the chapters (69 and 84) on which stanzas 12 and 15 are based.) It is also noteworthy that most of the passages he copied are found in the introductory stanza that begins each of Barclay's chapters, so we can assume that, in proceeding through Barclay, he concentrated on these introductory stanzas and probably skimmed over the rest of the material.

In the following quotations I give the stanza numbers of Granger and the chapter numbers of Barclay, which are taken (along with the spelling and punctuation) from the 1570 edition rather than the 1509 one, although we cannot be certain which one Granger used because there are no significant variants in the passages that he copied.[3] But it seems much more likely that he used the 1570 edition—indeed the publication of that edition may well have been the inspiration (if that is the word) leading to the production of this condensed version. Lines from the stanza introducing the chapter in Barclay are preceded by an asterisk.

Granger 2

> Many Fooles, the carte of sin now a dayes doth draw,
> Nowrishyng their sinne against all right and law:
> Though that the way to hell be very playne,
> Yet lyke a foole I aduise thee to returne agayne.

Barclay 45

> *Many in this life the cart of sinne doth drawe . . .
> *Nourishing their sinne against all right and lawe . . .

2 See stanzas 5, 8, 21, and 22 below.

3 In the passage from chapter 103, 'infortunable' in the 1509 edition becomes 'vnfortunable' in the 1570 edition and in Granger, but Granger could have made this change even if he used the earlier edition.

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And though the way be easy, strayght and playne,
The ende is naught, I aduise thee tourne agayne [P5]

Granger 3

He is a foole that his sinnes can not hate,
Naught young, worse olde, such is his estate:
This olde foole is glad of that name,
Desiryng all men to take parte of the same.

Barclay 5

*In my olde sinnes, and them not hate,
*Nought yonge, worse olde, suche is my state . . . [B4]
I am a foole and glad am of that name,
Desiring lawde for eche vngracious deede:
And of my foly to spreade abroade the same [B4^{v}]

Granger 4

Of Fooles, yet I fynd an other sorte,
Which are causers of lying, and yll reporte:
And he is a foole both euen and morrow,
That nothyng wyll lend, but all thynges borrow.

Barclay 7

*Of Fooles finde I another maner sorte,
*Which are cause of brawling, strife, and deuision:
*Suche are double tonged, that lesings reporte . . . [C3]

Barclay 25

*A man that is busy both euen and morowe . . .
*Of his frendes and neighbours to begge and to borowe [H6^{v}]

Granger 5

Of Fooles, yet an other sorte doth come,
Which neuer seketh for to haue wisedome:
Many such fooles, wisedome disdayne,
Yet for their foolishnes they shall suffer payne.

Barclay 8

*Of fooles yet another sorte doth come,
*Vnto our ship rowing with great trauayle,
*Which nought perceaue of doctrine nor wisedome . . .
*Let suche fooles thereat haue no disdayne,
*If they alone endure their losse and payne [C5]

Granger 6

He is a Foole which to others doth preach and tell,
And yet this foole is ready himself to go vnto hell:

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Liue thou vprightly, be cause of no blame,
If thou doo not, the more is thy shame.

Barclay 20

*So he is mad which to other doth preach and tell
*The way to heauen, and him selfe goth to hell . . . [G4]
Liue so that none may cause haue you to blame,
And yf ye do not, it is to your great shame. [G4^{v}]

Granger 7

He is a Foole, and euer be shall,
That others iudgeth, and himself worst of all:
This foole is blynd, frantike, and wood,
Without all reason, iudgeth bad thinges good.

Barclay 29

*He is a foole, and once shall haue a fall,
*Synce he will other iudge him selfe yet worst of all . . . [K3]
Of these fooles blinde, frantike and wood,
Without all reason is iudged to be good. [K4]

Granger 8

He is a Foole that wisedome doth eschue,
For no good counsell can bring him to vertue:
This foole which scorneth his neighbour fast,
Shall be scorned iustly himself at the last.

Barclay 41

*Yet are mo fooles which mocke and scorne fast,
*Suche as them sheweth wisedome and doctrine . . .
*Of foolishe mockers: let wise men them eschue,
*For no correction can bring them to vertue . . . [O2^{v}]
That they that on mockers alway their mindes cast,
Shall of all other be mocked at the last [O3^{v}]

Granger 9

An other Foole yet, I doe here fynd,
Which can not kepe close the secrets of his mynd:
This is a naturall foole, and vndiscrete,
Which can not hyde his owne counsell and secrete.

Barclay 48

*Of other fooles a number yet I finde,
*Which by their babbling wordes and language,
*Can not keepe close the secrete of thir minde . . .
He is a naturall foole and vndiscrete . . .
Which can not hide his councell and secrete [Q4]

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Granger 10

He is a Foole, that in youth wyll not prouyde,
In age must he sterue, or in pouertie abyde:
This is a foole, and of the numbe[r] one,
Which in the Sommer can make no prouision.

Barclay 68

*And he that in youth will nought for him prouide,
*In age must the paynes of pouertie abide.
Amonge our fooles I number him for one . . .
Making in the Summer no prouision [Z5^{v}]

Granger 11

He is a Foole, that getteth his goods wrongfullye,
For his heires after him, wyll spend it vnthriftelye:
This fooles golde is his God, wrongfullye got,
Why thou foole, thy golde is muk & clay, knowest thou not?

Barclay 3

*Golde is your god, riches gotten wrongfully . . .
For that which he getteth and kepeth wrongfully,
His heyre often wasteth much more vnthriftely [A5]

Granger 12

He is a Foole, whether he be man or wyfe,
Which styll deliteth in discorde and stryfe:
Such fooles their owne flesh to the bones may gnaw,
That contendeth in matters, scant worth a straw.

Barclay 69

*He is a foole, whether it be man or wife,
*Which him deliteth in iudgement and lawe,
*And euer contendeth in discorde and in strife,
*In small trifles and scantly worth a strawe:
*Suche their owne fleshe vnto the bones gnawe [Aa1^{v}]

Granger 15

He is a Foole, that thinketh it great wonder,
When God stryketh by lightnyng and thunder:
Alas, we dayly without all dread commit
Much cursed vice, for lacke of godly wit.

Barclay 84

*Some fooles maruayle and thinke it great wonder,
*When God vs striketh for our ill and offence
*With tempest, heate, sickenes, lightning or thunder . . . [Gg1]
Alas we dayly without all drede commit

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Muche cursed vice, sometime by ignoraunce,
Sometime by malice, sometime for lacke of wit [Gg2]

Granger 16

All youth, I doo lyken vnto Fooles blynd,
That vnto their Parents are rebels vnkynd:
Thou vnkynd chylde, and foole disobedient,
Remember what goods thy freends on thee spent.

Barclay 86

*Them also I repute for fooles blinde,
*Which haue no honour, worship ne reuerence
*To father and mother, but are to them vnkinde . . . [Gg5^{v}]
Thou vnkinde childe and inobedient . . .
Remember what goodes they haue on thee spent [Hh1]

Granger 17

He is a Foole, that greatly doth flatter and boast,
When he thinks least, he shall tast of the rost:
This foole at last, is cast out of fauour,
For flatteryng pleaseth no wise man of honour.

Barclay 96

*He often at the laste is caste out of fauour,
*For flattering pleaseth no wise man of honour [Mm3]

Granger 18

He is a Foole, and voyd of all prudence,
Which to vayne tales doth geue all his credence:
Therfore remember this both low and hye,
That flatterers speake fayre when they doo lye.

Barclay 97

*He is light minded and voyde of all prudence,
*Which alway is wont without aduisement
*To all vayne tales soone to geue credence . . . [Mm5]
Consider man whether thou be lowe or hye . . .
For flatterers ay speake fayrest when they lye [Mm6]

Granger 19

He is a naturall Foole, and a very daw,
That from doing good, his neighbour doth withdraw:
Such froward fooles, all goodnes they defile,
If their neighbours doe good, then they reuile.

Barclay 101

He is a naturall foole and eke a dawe . . .
Which labours to let, hinder, and withdrawe

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Good men and iust from dedes of goodnes . . . [Oo2]
Suche frowarde fooles all goodnes thus defile . . .
That with suche wordes the good men they reuile [Oo3]

Granger 20

He is a Foole, and greatly vnprouable,
That in all his doings he is vnfortunable:
But in his misfortune he is so blynd,
He neuer considereth no remedy in mynd.

Barclay 103

*He is a foole and greatly reproueable
*Which seeth and feeleth surely in his minde,
*That all his dedes are muche vnfortunable . . .
*But in his misfortune yet is he so blinde
*That he is improuident, abiding willingly
*Despising, though he might for to finde remedy [Pp1]

Granger 21

He is a Foole, that himself doth applye
Behynd his neighbours backe to sclander with enuye:
Such beastly fooles commonly are well apayd,
Which thinke all is well, that falsely is wayd.

Barclay 104

But be they angry, or be they well apayde . . . [Pp4^{v}]
And then teache other to vertue to apply,
And not by malice on them to grudge and grin,
Or behinde their backe them slaunder by enuy [Pp5]

Granger 22

Yet more Fooles there be, which be vncommendable,
That vseth yll manners alway at the table:
Of pleasant nurtour they haue no heede,
But beastly entend as swyne alway to feede.

Barclay 105

*It is thing lawfull and not vncommendable,
*To touche the ill maners, the foule and lothsome wayes
*Which diuers fooles nowe vseth at the table . . .
*Of pleasaunt nurture they haue no care nor heede,
*But beastly intende as swine their wombe to feede [Pp6]

Granger 23

Many Fooles there be, in these our dayes,
Which seeme to be wyse, yet folow foolish wayes:
Therfore I haue tolde vnto you very playne,
What foolishnes in these dayes in many doth remayne.

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Barclay 107

> But he that can fraude, craft, and gilefull wayes,
> Hath name of nobles and wisedome nowe a dayes [Rr1^{v}]

Granger 24

> He is a Foole, that wyll styll desyre
> His owne death, to runne in to the fyre:
> And he is a foole, that hath no mynd deuoute,
> But in the temple styll walketh aboute.

Barclay 44

> *He is a foole that will purchase and desire
> *His owne death, or putteth him selfe in ieopardie,
> *Leaping in a well, or in a flaming fire [P2^{v}]

Barclay 43

> *A foole is he, and hath no minde deuoute . . .
> *Which goeth in the Churche, his houndes him about [O6^{v}]

Finally, twenty-two of the twenty-five stanzas in Granger's poem end with the refrain:

> And as the prouerbe doth show very playne,
> A hood for this foole, to kepe him from the rayne.[4]

Barclay gives this proverb to us (and to Granger) in chapter 4:

> To keepe you from the rayne, ye shall haue a fooles hood [B3]

and again in chapter 76, where he defines a 'fooles liuery':

> That is a hood to keepe you from the rayne [Cc5^{v}]

In view of Granger's dependence on borrowing, we might go on to ask if he was also indebted to another well-known catalogue of fools in Robert Copland's poem, *Jyl of braintfords testament*, which survives in two copies from two different editions in the 1560s (*STC* 5730, 5731). This may seem very unlikely because of the striking difference in tone and perspective: *The Ship of Fools* (and therefore Granger's poem) has a serious moral and religious purpose—most of the fools described there are really sinners who are threatened with eternal damnation—but Copland's purpose, he insists, is to amuse us, and most of his fools are simply impractical or stupid. Moreover, his

4 This combines two proverbial phrases: 'A hood for this fool', listed in M. P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950), H585, and F. P. Wilson, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1970), 383a; and 'To have wit enough to come in out of the rain', listed in Wilson, *Dictionary*, 903b. Tilley records the second as 'Fools have wit enough to come in out of the rain' (F537), but I question this in 'Proverbial Fools in the Rain in *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 49 (1999), 31–2.

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poem became famous not for its list of fools but for Jill's bequest of a fart to each of them, which is the focus of all the later references to it.[5]

There are, however, two aspects of Copland's poem that could have influenced Granger. One is the number of fools in the catalogue, which cannot come from Barclay since he has over a hundred kinds. Near the end of her testament Jill has a brief discussion with the Curate, who is recording it:

> JILL. Now hold your hand and make a stay there
> Howe many fartes haue I bequest here
> For by my trouth I am almost wery.
> CURATE. For soth maystres, here is iomp four & twenty
> JILL. Nay set in one mo, to make a hole quarteron [B1^{v}]

And Granger's opening stanza reads:

> Stay a while with pacience, my freends, I you pray,
> Of the orders of Fooles, somewhat I wyll say:
> Fiue and twentie, iust a quarterne is ye know,
> Euery Foole in his foolishnes wyll I show.[6]

The other aspect is the format of the catalogue, which also cannot come from Barclay, who devotes many stanzas to each type of fool. Copland's Jill provides a much more helpful model by limiting each type to a single stanza of three rhyming lines: a couplet that usually begins 'He that' and describes the fool, followed by another line that awards him a fart and serves as a kind of refrain. Granger adopts a very similar format, beginning most stanzas with 'He is a fool that' (or 'which'), then describing him, and then awarding him a fool's hood in the phrase quoted earlier, which is the refrain. The closest thing to a refrain in Barclay is the metaphor of the ship that appears in most chapters—fools board it, are given room on it, etc.—but Granger could not use this without revealing his source.[7] The proverbial phrase that he uses instead also derives from Barclay, as we saw, but the idea of making it a refrain to end each stanza may have been suggested by Jill's legacy.

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5 See Thomas Nashe's Prologue to *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592), his Epistle introducing Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), and an undated letter to William Cotton (*The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R. B. McKerrow and F. P. Wilson (Oxford, 1958), iii. 235, 314, iv. 421, v. 195), and Sir John Harington's *Ulysses upon Ajax* (1596), B4. As late as 1637, L.P. (Lawrence Price), in a poem prefixed to *Harry White His Humour* by M.P. (Martin Parker), speaks of 'old Gillians legacie' (B3^{v}). Copland says that the phrase 'a fart | Of Jyll of Branford' was in common use and that he will explain its origin (A2).

6 On 1 Aug. 1586 Edward White entered in the *Stationers' Register* a ballad entitled 'The xxtiev orders of knaues' (Arber 2.451), which has not survived, so we cannot tell if it was related to Granger's 'quarterne' of fools.

7 There is a vestige of this metaphor in stanza 5, where Granger says that the group of fools 'doth come' but does not explain what it is coming to. In the passage quoted from Barclay's chapter 8, which this stanza draws on, the group 'doth come, | Vnto our ship rowing with great trauayle'.

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